

TANKER EXTRAORDINAIRE • AIRMAN XTREME • ON THE ROAD TO RECONSTRUCTION



MAGAZINE OF AMERICA'S AIR FORCE

# Airman

QUARTERLY

FALL 2006

## OUT OF LEBENON

AIRMEN TRANSPORT CITIZENS  
FROM A NATION OF CRISIS

## SOARING TO GLORY

MEMORIAL SYMBOLIZES SACRIFICE,  
CELEBRATES SERVICE

# AIRMEN WARRIORS

BASIC MILITARY TRAINING EVOLVES TO MEET WARFIGHTING DEMANDS



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photo by  
Tech. Sgt. Cecilio M. Ricardo Jr.



## Airman

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Design Editor	Steve Ingram
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#### FROM THE CHIEF

## Air Force focuses on three priorities

Amidst fighting the global war on terror, the Air Force remains focused on its top three priorities. Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley said the service is concerned primarily with fighting and winning the long war against global terrorism and militant extremism, taking care of our Airmen and their families, and the overall recapitalization and modernization of aging, obsolete air and spacecraft.

The global war on terror began after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. But the Air Force has been engaged in continuous battle for much longer than the recent conflict.

"We've been doing this in the Arabian Gulf since August of 1990," he said. "The Air Force has never left the Middle East. It's critical for us all to understand the following: the Air Force has been in continual combat since that time — 16 straight years through Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Vigilant Warrior, Desert Fox, and now Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

"In fact, we've been fighting in Afghanistan 14 months longer than the United States fought World War II," he said. "While conducting these Middle East operations, the Air Force also conducted simultaneous combat ops in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and over Serbia. No other component or service can say that.

"Out of all this continued combat experience comes an incredible wealth of training, deployment, rotation, expeditionary and true combat lessons learned and an opportunity to capture things that work, reject things that don't work, and take those things on board in a programmatic and fielding sense — to ensure we're providing the most modern and most combat effective training and equipment possible," the general said. "And we are doing this while we are transforming, while fighting a global war, and while operating the oldest inventory of aircraft in the Air Force's history."

As the service continues to be engaged in the global war on terror, it is changing the way it develops and trains Airmen, so they are better prepared to fight, and so the service delivers a better prepared force to combatant commanders. Those changes begin in basic training.

"Every new Airman now gets a rifle, every new Airman will qualify with that weapon, and every new Airman will soon qualify with a pistol," he said. "We are looking at what it takes to better prepare our people to operate in an expeditionary Air Force engaged in a global war on terrorism that will likely last a generation, and that's a huge set of challenges and opportunities for us."

That also means changing occupational training. In coming years, many career fields will be consolidated, resulting in Airmen with a broader set of skills, and technical schools will put a new emphasis on warrior skills.

"We will focus the technical schools on expeditionary skills, and focus the technical schools on what our new Airmen need to learn," he said. "These Airmen will have to be prepared to fight across all spectrums of

conflict. That's our job."

Also of concern is the requirement to recapitalize its fleet of aging, obsolete aircraft and spacecraft.

"As the Air Force executes its annual budget authority and develops its long term programs the money is divided into one of four general areas; personnel, operations/maintenance, infrastructure/MILCON and investments," General Moseley said. "In the past the investment accounts or the seed corn to recapitalize and modernize has taken a back seat.

"That is exactly why we are operating the oldest inventory of aircraft and spacecraft in the history of the Air Force," he said. "When I put this uniform on, as a cadet at Texas A&M University, the average age of the Air Force aircraft inventory was a little over eight years. That average age today is 24 and a half years."

The service is on track today to replace its fleet of aging KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft, but no tanker replacement has been selected. Once a selection is made, the general expects the last KC-135R will still be around for an additional 30 plus years as the new aircraft are delivered.

"The Airman that flies or crews that last KC-135R has likely not been born yet. In fact, the mom of that Airman may not have been born yet," he said. "This is the cycle we must break."

Another issue is maintaining the older aircraft the Air Force would like to retire. Congressional legislation has precluded the service from retiring aircraft it no longer needs. These Congressional restrictions on retiring obsolete aircraft include the C-5, KC-135E, C-130E, F-117A, U-2 and the B-52.

"The annual cost to maintain those aging aircraft increases as the aircraft get older," the general said. "And, as the threat continues to evolve, these older aircraft become less combat capable and certainly less survivable. To help us turn this trend around we are working hard with the various committees, staff and members on the Hill to provide relief from the restrictive language, and we're now seeing some support."

General Moseley believes the Air Force needs the flexibility to manage its own inventory as it pursues its massive modernization program.

"Our recapitalization efforts are both monumental and critical for us to be able to defend the nation and provide the Joint Team with air, space, and cyberspace

dominance," he said. "Although we make it look easy, it's not. The air and space dominance we've guaranteed our ground and maritime forces for more than 50 years requires incredibly hard work from our Airmen, who deserve cutting-edge equipment to meet the challenges of the 21st Century."

Those challenges begin with warfighting, but do not end there. General Moseley expects to be engaged around the world in an array of operations that demand Airmen and their equipment be more adaptive, more responsive and more expeditionary than ever.

"Our modernized inventory will complement the training initiatives we're pursuing for the nearly 700,000 active duty Airmen, Reservists, Guardsman and civilians in the Air Force," he said. "Our Airmen are national treasures. It's amazing what they make possible and we owe it to them to ensure their success."

— Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez  
Airman ♣ Fall 2006





# AIRMEN WARRIORS

## BASIC MILITARY TRAINING EVOLVES TO MEET WARFIGHTING DEMANDS

by Annette Crawford • photos by Tech. Sgt. Cecilio M. Ricardo Jr.

**T**he “pickle” suits are gone. So are the two-story wooden structures, except for a few token buildings sprinkled across the base. Women trainees no longer take make-up and cosmetics classes. The “Green Monster” exists no more. The banks of pay phones have disappeared, and you no longer hear calls of “Smoke ‘em if you got ‘em!” Yes, Air Force basic military training has changed.

Nearing 7 million graduates since basic training began, the Air Force is on the threshold of major changes in its program as the service reaches its 60th anniversary. The most significant transformation is extending the length of BMT by two and a half weeks. And that evolution is one of necessity – a necessity to enhance warfighting skills, says Col. Robert J. MacDonald, commander of the 737th Training Group at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.

**A trainee from the 332nd Training Squadron uses the butt of his rifle** to attack a simulated aggressor with minimum force during the field training exercise portion of basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Today's Airmen face a new and improved basic military training program — that means the opportunity to enhance warfighting skills.



“From 9/11 we learned that in order for us to do our jobs, we need to go to other locations,” the colonel said. “We have to be able to go to places that aren’t well established, so the expansion of BMT and the changes involved with that are positive things.”

With approximately 5,000 Airmen in the area of responsibility performing duties and missions that the Army has traditionally done, enhanced training was required.

“These things require a different skill set, an air base defense skill set. Training in both the M-9 and M-16 — those things are more and more important,” Colonel MacDonald said.

**Winds of change**

Based on world events and mission requirements, the length of the BMT program has bounced everywhere from two days to 13 weeks. The first 20 years of its existence saw the most flux.

During the Korean War buildup in 1950, BMT dropped from four to two weeks. Very little training was going on except for processing and uniform issue. The entire mathematics portion was deleted. Then in January and February 1951, the two-week program was reduced to processing alone — a matter of days. Airmen had to make up their training at follow-on locations. By March of that year, it shot back up to eight weeks. BMT has been at the six-week mark since 1966.

And as the length of BMT fluxed, so did the nature of the world. For many of the Airmen who joined after Vietnam and before Desert Storm, deployments were unheard of unless they were in an operational career field. Typical desk-bound jobs were rarely found in a forward operating location — that was something for “the folks in flight suits.”

But since Desert Storm, and especially since 9/11, that culture has changed. The Airmen who sign up today understand that they will deploy, and that they will more than likely learn about jobs that were previously considered responsibilities of the Army.

To accommodate these demands, the new eight and a half week-program will include a fully functioning field training area. The change is expected to take effect in fiscal 2008.

With the additional training time, Airmen will have the opportunity to go beyond just being familiar with skills. They will become proficient in weapons handling and maintenance, integrated base defense and emergency medicine. Other areas, such as classes on



Air Force history and heritage, will be enhanced. New training will be introduced on suicide prevention and sexual assault prevention and reporting.

Leading the Airmen through these changes will be the NCOs who have led trainees for 60 years — the military training instructors.

**Backbone of the program**

The core strength of the basic military training program will always be the military training instructors.

“Our military training instructors aggressively teach Air Force tradition, heritage and indoctrination,” Colonel MacDonald said, “so Airmen (graduate) with the level of discipline to understand what their duty is, and to do their duty, regardless of what the conditions are.”

One of those lynchpin NCOs is Tech. Sgt. Terry Thoe, a MTI since 2001. The Humble, Texas, native has been on 13 deployments and served in eight combat zones since joining in 1989.



**During the second day of training, Military Training Instructor Tech. Sgt. Terry Thoe (above) teaches facing movements** to the members of Flight 572, 332nd Training Squadron. Master Sgt. Lisa Moberly (left) instructs a trainee how to properly address “the snake pit,” a collection of military training instructors, in the dining facility during lunch. MTIs are tough, but that’s their job. They have the challenge of converting young civilians into Airmen capable of living the core values and performing in the operational Air Force – all in a matter of weeks.





**Ready for the challenge, Trainees Jenni Hawkins and Jenifer Calhoun (above) scream “Warriors!” before entering the confidence course** during basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. Trainee Teresa Martinez (above, right) carefully navigates a water obstacle at the confidence course. Trainees march back to camp after a long day of defending defensive fighting positions and practicing self aid and buddy care techniques in the field training exercise portion of Warrior Week.

He feels the stress factors are the same as when he went through basic training, but physical readiness training has improved greatly.

“We did PC — physical conditioning — in our BDUs and tennis shoes. It was nothing like what we have now,” he said.

Sergeant Thoe watches over his flights with an observant eye for detail.

“I watch every move they make,” he said. “I know everything they’re thinking when they’re thinking it.”

And when those thoughts are less than Air Force-like, Sergeant Thoe is there to rein Airmen in.

“They took an oath to obey the orders of those appointed over them, and it doesn’t matter if that person is the same rank or not,” he said. “When they get out of line I remind them of the UCMJ and the core values.”



His techniques must be working. When asked who among his flight wanted to be military training instructors, three trainees shot up their hands without hesitation.

#### Out of the mouths of trainees

Though not all trainees are ready to sign up for MTI duty, almost all can recognize the amazing changes they’re experiencing. They’re transitioning from trainees to warrior Airmen.

The women of Flight 572, 322nd Training Squadron, graduated Aug. 11. A week before their graduation, they gathered in the dormitory dayroom to talk about their experiences in basic military training.

Airman Erika Jenkins of Columbia, S.C., attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for one year before enlisting.

“I joined the Air Force because it seemed as though my father had planned out my life for me. After attending college for one year I realized that it wasn’t something I really wanted to do,” she said. “I wanted to set myself apart from my peers.”

About half of the 45-member flight enlisted immediately after high school. Several had college under their belt, and a number were from military families.

“Dad was in the Marines,” said Airman Desiree Campbell of Crystal River, Fla. “He’s the reason I joined the Air Force — he suggested it. He said if he could have gone back to do it again he would join the Air Force instead. My dad’s my hero and I want to make him proud.”

On her graduation day July 14, Airman Betsy Ann Pittman couldn’t stop smiling. Her favorite portion of training?

Warrior Week, a concept that became reality in October 1999. Scheduled during the fourth week of training, Warrior Week includes the confidence course, weapons training and initial training in military survival skills — all basic skills needed to be a successful member of the air and space expeditionary forces.

“That’s where you really take all your training and all the hardcore stuff about being an Airman,” the Winlock, Wash., native said. “That’s when you got to yell and you got to scream and you got to roll around in the mud and hold that gun and actually fire a gun.”

Twenty-five-year-old Airman Alan Kenoyer graduated from basic training in January. Now stationed at the 343rd Training Squadron at Lackland, he said he was amazed with what his military training instructor accomplished.

“I don’t know how my TI did what he did. Fifty just ... ignorant males. All in the same dormitory. And he was there from 4 a.m. to midnight. I have to give that man kudos. Staff Sgt. Leslie Green really influenced my life to no end,” said the Vancouver, Wash., native and basic training honor graduate. “If one man can affect one individual in each flight that he has, then more power to him because those are the kind of individuals the Air Force needs.”

Airman Kenoyer was 25 when he got to basic training, and had smoked for 11 years. His initial run time was 12:40, and he could knock out only 20 push-ups and 15 sit-ups.

“By the time I (graduated), my final run time was 9:43, and I could do 62 push-ups and 57 sit-ups,” he said. “The Air Force has instilled in me the hope that I can be constantly improving myself. It has been the best experience of my life, hands down.”



**Trainee Ashley Williams (above, left) sheds a tear during the Airman’s coin ceremony at Lackland.** Trainees in their sixth week of basic military training receive an Airman’s coin marking their transition from trainee to Airman. Airman Basics Shortner and Erika Jenkins hug after graduating from basic military training in August.

#### Taking the high road

As the program continues to evolve, one thing won’t change — prospective Airmen can expect the biggest challenge of their lives when they come to basic training.

“Thucydides, in writing ‘The History of the Peloponnesian War’ about the warriors from Athens and Sparta, said, ‘He who is best is trained in the severest of schools.’ The Airmen who show up here will be trained in one of the severest of schools because we want a high-quality Airman to walk out the other end,” the colonel said.

And for Sergeant Thoe, he knows that his flights will succeed.

“When they go out there, they’re going to represent me,” the military training instructor said. “I always tell them, ‘Let your actions speak for themselves. Take the high road.’” 🦅



# More than an ID checker

There's more to being a cop than guarding planes and checking IDs at the gate.

In a career field where Airmen learn to drive all-terrain vehicles and Humvees, shoot .50-caliber machine guns and grenade launchers, and operate tactical radio systems, Tech. Sgt. Corey Miller has had his share of exciting adventures.

The native of Raymond, Wash., likes the ever-changing mission of security forces because it keeps his career field interesting. Part of that mission includes supporting the other services — with Airmen now pulling duty as prison guards, convoy transporters and embedded training team members.

Sergeant Miller was recently deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, where he served as the antiterrorism officer for the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing. Prior to that, his last deployment was to Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, in 1997.

"Having the chance to deploy now was an excellent opportunity to experience the drastic change in mission since my last deployment," he said. "We train to patrol 'outside the wire' and conduct missions to protect resources."

And the 12-year veteran doesn't regret a moment. He allowed the Air Force to select his career field and has enjoyed the ride.

"In looking back, I wouldn't have changed a thing," he said. "We are, and have been, the ground combat force for the Air Force. We're the boots on the ground."

When he's not deployed, Sergeant Miller serves as an investigator in the 15th Security Forces Squadron at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.  
photo by Senior Airman Brian Ferguson

## Tech. Sgt. Corey Miller

Security forces investigations  
15th Security Forces Squadron,  
Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii  
Years in Air Force: 12  
Hometown: Raymond, Wash.  
Number in security forces (3P0X1): 23,637

*"We are, and have been, the ground combat force for the Air Force. We're the boots on the ground."*





# TANKER EXTRAORDINAIRE

## Old and tried, the KC-135 Stratotanker still provides global reach

by Louis A. Arana-Barradas

photos by Master Sgt. Lance Cheung



Looking down at the whitecaps of the North Sea 16,000 feet below her, Staff Sgt. Andrea Otto couldn't help but smile. It was a beautiful day. The sunny, clear blue skies and unlimited visibility made it perfect weather for aerial refueling.

A few minutes earlier, the KC-135 Stratotanker aerial boom operator refueled a half dozen Belgian F-16 Fighting Falcons. With the deft hand of a veteran, the 23-year-old guided the boom into the fuel receptacle of each jet. In less than 15 minutes, she'd pumped 1,000 gallons of fuel into each fighter. Then the jets peeled away to finish their NATO training mission.

Then the hard-working tanker turned slowly toward its next "track," where it would fly in a big oval and wait for the next flock of fighters. In the cramped boom operator's pod, Sergeant Otto lay on her stomach, catching a breather. With her chin on a pad, she checked the azure sky.

"Can you believe the job I have?" the sergeant from Fremont, Wis., said. "Look at my office. There's nothing like it. I wouldn't trade this job for anything."

"That's why I joined the Air Force," said Sergeant Otto, of the 351st Air Refueling Squadron at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England.

### The Stratotanker saga

But that's not to say the Air Force doesn't want to swap out the four-engine jet with a new one. That is in the works. But it still hasn't found one to carry out its recapitalization plan. And when the service does find a

replacement, it will take more than 30 years to make the change.

The change has been a long time coming. The Air Force bought its first 29 Stratotankers in 1954, the first one flew in August 1956 and first model arrived for duty in June 1957. The last tanker entered service in 1965. So by the time the last of the 531 Stratotankers retires, the oldest jet could be almost 80 years old. At Mildenhall, which operates U.S. Air Force in Europe's 15-tanker fleet, the newest tanker rolled off the assembly line in 1963.

But the tanker wasn't working as hard in its earlier years. That's because the Air Force designed it to refuel its fleet of B-52 Stratofortress bombers as they flew to drop their nuclear cargo on the Soviet Union or one of its Warsaw Pact cronies. Fortunately, that never happened.

"The KC-135 spent a big part of its early life sitting alert at Strategic Air Command bases," said Col. Mike Saville, commander of Mildenhall's 100th Maintenance Group. "It spent a lot of time on the ground. It didn't get a lot of flying hours."

The tanker has supported U.S. military operations since the Vietnam War. But its biggest mission change didn't occur until the end of the Cold War. Then the tanker went into overdrive.

"That's when we really started flying the aircraft, and flying it hard," the colonel from Cumberland, Md., said. "It's a great airframe and it's going to be with us a long time."

That's good, because the tanker has additional duties.

"Our job in life is to put the right jet at the right place at the right time

with the right fuel load for our receivers," said Col. Mike Stough, commander of the 100th Air Refueling Wing. "But we also provide critical combat support."

### Transformation

Over the years, the Air Force has pressed the jet into service as an airborne command post, to do reconnaissance work and to help with a score of humanitarian operations. In the past decade, the airplane has also taken on an aeromedical evacuation mission. That applies to the entire fleet, most of which belongs to Air Mobility Command. Pacific Air Forces has tankers, too.

The Mildenhall jets' turf stretches from the Arctic Circle to South Africa and from the west coast of Europe to the Middle East. And with the rash of international events unfolding in its back yard, the tanker wing stays busy doing nontraditional jobs.

"We're all over the place," said Colonel Stough, who is from Savannah, Ga.

The wing's tankers — two are 1958 models — supports a host of customers. These include European Command, USAFE and NATO. And during the start of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the wing was the first to sustain the air bridge that took U.S. forces from the United States to the fight. Today, dozens more tankers help the unit in the volatile area.

That makes tankers one of the highest-tasked fleets in the mobility

**Staff Sgt. Craig Lambert** checks the flaps on a KC-135 Stratotanker during a preflight inspection at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England. The sergeant from Cincinnati is with the 100th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. Squadron maintainers work 12-hour shifts to ensure that the nearly 50-year-old aerial refueling tankers are ready to fly.

business, according to Lt. Gen. Christopher Kelly, vice commander of Air Mobility Command.

"Since 9-11, our tanker fleet has provided fuel for our air defense fighters patrolling the skies over our nation. It has supported combat operations over Iraq and Afghanistan," the general said. "And it has performed a myriad of other life-saving, humanitarian and support roles."

Approximately 80 percent of the tanker fleet is on the job daily, sometimes on short notice.

Mildenhall tankers, for example, left the confines of their base in the sedate English countryside in July to help get American out of Lebanon. The wing helped deploy to Cyprus MH-53 Pave Low helicopters from the base's 352nd Special Operations Group. The tankers then hung around to help refuel aircraft helping with the humanitarian operations there.

The tanker's flexibility does not surprise Master Sgt. Mike Conner, a 100th Operations Group boom operator who is the longest-serving KC-135 crewmember at Mildenhall. His first flight in an airplane was when





**Staff Sgt. Daniel Schnell** removes the brake pucks from a KC-135 Stratotanker brake plate. The sergeant from the 6th Maintenance Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., is working with Mildenhall's 100th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. The maintainers worked 12-hour shifts to recondition the aircraft parts, many that arrive with desert sand still on them.

he flew from Chicago to San Antonio for basic training 21 years ago. His second flight was in the Stratotanker. He's been smitten by the tanker ever since.

"It's an amazing aircraft because of what it can do and because of how versatile it is," the sergeant from Rosiclare, Ill., said. "We've even picked up aeromedical evacuations. We didn't even think about doing that back in 1985. Now, it's part of our mission."

The jet's versatility comes from its ability to transform. To keep flying and doing its job, the Air Force upgraded the jets. That started in the 1980s with the replacement of the jet's original engines. New turbofan engines made it more efficient. The low-slung engines provide double the thrust and give the jet longer range. That allowed the jet to carry more fuel. The engines are quieter and don't emit smoke like the ones they replaced.

Then, in the 1990s, the fleet started to receive compass, radar and Global Positioning System upgrades. Along with these, the jets also received upgrades to its avionics systems, including multifunctional displays, flight management systems and a color weather radar. The changes gave the jet a digital "glass cockpit."

The changes also meant the jet no longer needed a navigator. Sergeant Conner said they also did away with one of the boom operator's jobs. The "boom" would take sextant shots of the stars, which allowed the navigator to triangulate the jet's position.

"We'd navigate across the planet using celestial navigation — basically like Columbus did in 1492," the sergeant said. "I hated to see the navigator go, but that's modernization."

But in the boom pod, things remained much the same. It retained much of the same technology with which the aircraft arrived for duty.

**Maintaining a workhouse**



**Senior Airman Jeremy Lueth** hand washes the centerline on the underbelly of a KC-135 Stratotanker at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England. The Airman from Mason City, Iowa, is with the 100th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron. He spends 12 hours a day leading a cleaning team that keeps the nearly 50-year-old aircraft corrosion-free and looking its best.





**Staff Sgt. Andrea Otto** scans the sky over the North Sea for fighters from the boom operator's compartment at the back of her KC-135 Stratotanker. **Capt. Rob Kline** (bottom right) scans the sky as he pilots a KC-135 Stratotanker toward a refueling rendezvous over the North Sea.

The upgrades make the tanker more reliable. But keeping the veteran jet airborne gets tougher every day, Chief Master Sgt. Brian Allison said. An “old timer,” the maintenance group’s superintendent has been helping keep the jet flying for 29 years. He’s been a crew chief and then held jobs in KC-135 training, production, maintenance and job control.

After all its years of service, the aircraft remains a solid and dependable airframe, the chief from Lockport, N.Y., said. Because of its solid maintenance effort, Mildenhall tankers usually surpass the Air Force mission-capable rate standard of 84 percent.

“To use a simple term, not raw numbers, I’d give our airframes a solid “B” rating,” Chief Allison said. “And if you do your math, for a 50-year-old aircraft, that’s a pretty good average.”

Keeping the jet — which has corrosion, leaky fuel cells and other problems — flying is a testament to the hard work of the maintainers on the line, Colonel Saville said. He said Airmen sometimes perform maintenance magic to keep the jets flying.

But maintainers say there is nothing magic about the job they do. On the flightline and in the maintenance back shops, it’s the preventive maintenance that helps avert problems. And when an airplane breaks, maintenance troops find innovative ways to repair the broken tankers.

“Sometimes we need to come up with our own fix,” 2nd Lt. Katie



**A Belgian F-16 Fighting Falcon** flies into contact position below and behind a KC-135 Stratotanker from Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, over the North Sea. The Belgians were participating with other NATO countries in exercise Wycombe Warrior.

Williams said. “And it takes a lot of ingenuity to come up with a fix when the solution isn’t in the technical orders.”

The lieutenant from Tustin, Calif., is officer in charge of the 100th Maintenance Squadron’s fabrications shop. In the more than one year she has been in the Air Force she has grown fond of the old jet. And she learned that trusting maintainers to do the job keeps the jets flying.

“As long as we can fabricate parts, maintain it, ensure its structural integrity and get it up in the air, we can fly it,” she said.

Master Sgt. J.R. Robertson is superintendent of the 100th Maintenance Operations Squadron’s maintenance operations center. He believes forward-thinking Airmen will keep the tanker flying. But after 19 years as a maintainer, he believes the jet is not winning the battle.

“Everyone talks about how old the KC-135 is and how well it’s holding up after all these years,” the sergeant from Charlotte, N.C., said. “But in my opinion, it’s actually how well maintenance is holding up the KC-135.”

The sergeant may be right. But it will take more than that to keep the tanker in the air for another 40 years. It will take a mixture of technology and airframe upgrades and dedicated maintenance troops and aircrews to keep the airplane flying. And the Air Force will have to find a replacement to take some of the ever-increasing mission burden off the old workhorse.

In the meantime, the Stratotanker keeps flying. Sergeant Conner has a stepdaughter who is also a boom operator and he talks about the tanker like it was part of his family. He hopes the jet will continue to do its job. And he believes its ability to do the mission and bring its crews home is what will keep it flying.

“That’s the airplane’s greatest asset,” Sergeant Conner said. 🦅





# Survival of the fittest

For the past 11 years, Staff Sgt. Alan Pratt has not had his Air Force job put to the test.

That tears at him a bit. He longs to verify the equipment he maintains will work and the training he gives will make a difference. But to find that out, someone will have to bailout from or abandon a KC-135 Stratotanker. He doesn't want that to happen — but he still wonders.

"It will make all I do worth it if an aircrew member has to use my equipment, then returns, pats me on the back and says, 'Sergeant Pratt, thank you. Good job. I'm still walking,'" he said.

The aircrew life support specialist may never hear those words, and he's OK with that. It doesn't distract him from his duties. Each day he inspects, maintains and tweaks the life support and survival gear he manages. And he keeps his aircrews up to date on how to survive anywhere.

But Sergeant Pratt is sure the equipment — helmets, parachutes, life rafts, radios and other survival gear — will pass the test. And he's sure the training he provides will pay off. After all, he's qualified to maintain all the equipment and has been to every survival course — like arctic, tropical, desert and water — the Air Force offers. He also accomplished parachute training.

Aircrews at the 351st Air Refueling Squadron have the same training, but rely on Sergeant Pratt for the updates. So he stays busy learning "all he can to help keep aircrews alive," he said.

"Because they'll call you out when they think you are blowing smoke," Sergeant Pratt said. "I must be sure. Because if they have to bail out at 10,000 feet and their parachute doesn't open, then it's all over for them."

But since the Stratotanker has a good safety record, keeping aircrews focused on something they've trained on or heard a million times isn't easy. So the sergeant throws himself into his lectures with all the enthusiasm he can muster. He knows his job and equipment inside out.

"The challenge is making aircrews understand that one day they may have to use this stuff," Sergeant Pratt said. "So if I'm not hyped-up and excited about what I do, I'll lose them."

And in the sergeant's line of work that's unacceptable.

by Louis A. Arana-Barradas

photo by Master Sgt. Lance Cheung

## Staff Sgt. Alan E. Pratt

Aircrew life support specialist

351st Air Refueling Squadron

Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England

Years in Air Force: 11

Hometown: Goldsboro, N.C.

Number of aircrew life support specialists: (1T1X1): 1,617

*"I maintain life support equipment, so tanker aircrews depend on me. Because if they have to bail out at 10,000 feet and their parachute doesn't open up, that's it for them."*



# OUT OF LEBANON

*AIRMEN TRANSPORT CITIZENS FROM A NATION IN CRISIS*

by Louis A. Arana-Barradas

## **Preparing for liftoff**

American citizens board an MH-53M Pave Low helicopter in Beirut, Lebanon. The helicopter is part of the 352nd Special Operations Group at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England.

When Americans in Lebanon found themselves caught in the middle of the bloody fight between Hezbollah and Israel, many wanted out of the country — fast. But they just couldn't drive out or catch an airliner out of Beirut. Even walking out was out of the question. The intense fighting cut many of them off from any lifeline to safety.

In days, the U.S. military — directed by U.S. Central Command — mounted a massive effort to get out those people who wanted to depart. Soon, Airmen from Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, were on scene helping fly people to safety in their HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters.

Initially, all the people getting out of Lebanon wound up in Cyprus. But when space ran out, Airmen started flying some people to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, or Ramstein Air

Base, Germany. Aboard the Air Mobility Command and U.S. Air Forces in Europe transport aircraft, teams of medics and technicians provided much-needed care and reassurance.

Crews flying C-17 Globemaster III aircraft also took people straight to stateside bases. More than 1,200 of the displaced people made it to McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., Charleston AFB, S.C., and McChord AFB, Wash. At McGuire, 305th Air Mobility Wing vice commander Col. Bill Spacy summed up the U.S. military effort.

"We are glad to be able to help our fellow Americans leave Lebanon and return safely to their homes in the United States," he said. "Our dedicated mobility professionals are proud to be involved in this vital mission."



by Senior Airman Brian Ferguson

## Moving through Cyprus

Tech. Sgt. Jim Gary helps place a life preserver on Carole Souaidan before boarding an MH-53M Pave Low helicopter at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. Sergeant Gary (below), an aerial gunner with the 352nd Special Operations Group at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, checks the rear of the helicopter as it leaves the country. The 352nd SOG transported more than 260 citizens, flying the MH-53M and the MC-130P Combat Shadow. After arriving in Cyprus, American citizens were flown to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Airman 1st Class Jarod Lambert (far right), a loadmaster, walks down an aisle of a C-17 Globemaster III ready to assist passengers.



by Senior Airman Brian Ferguson



by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearse







by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall



by Kenn Mann



by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall



## Out of harm's way

(clockwise from left) Loadmaster Airman 1st Class Jarod Lambert and American children wait for buses on the stairwell of a C-17 after landing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Maj. Jennifer Taylor, a nurse, talks with a young boy in the passenger terminal. Food, lodging, medical support and a host of other services were made available to the approximately 1,800 American citizens that passed through via Air Force aircraft. An American citizen thanks an Airman as he serves her food at Ramstein. Staff Sgt. Robert Anderson marshals in a C-17 at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J. Air Force aircrews from McGuire, Charleston and McChord Air Force Bases flew American citizens back into the United States.



# FREEFALLIN'

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY CADETS LEAP INTO THE "PUREST FORM OF FLIGHT"

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Ken Wright

The world is a big place, but it looks a heck of a lot bigger when you're plummeting toward it at more than 100 miles-per-hour. Just ask any one of the 650 U.S. Air Force Academy cadets who went through the school's Airmanship 490 course last year.

The name may sound more like an upper level college course — complete with lecture hall and guest speakers — but rest assured, the experience is anything but static.

Airmanship 490 teaches basic freefall parachuting at the Academy's 98th Flying Training Squadron, a place that uses the freefall experience to develop character in the young men and women who will soon be giving tall orders of their own.

Following their freshman year, hundreds of cadets welcome the opportunity to jump from the UIV-18B Twin Otter, which might say a little bit about

## MORE THAN 100 MILES PER HOUR

the rigors of academics and military training that first year.

Though leaping into the wild blue yonder can test the mettle of even the bravest Airman, cadets learn everything they need to float safely to earth before they ever hear the jumpmaster's order, "stand in the door." In fact, students spend three days in intense ground training before even boarding the Otter. Starting at 0530, cadets learn the big and the little things that mean the difference between life and death.

Most importantly, cadets must pass a physical fitness test to ensure their readiness for the physical rigors of jumping. Following the PFT, they "leap" into the basics of freefall parachuting: the arch-count-pull sequence, parachute landing, and suspended harness training. The culmination of this training is Suspended Harness Level 4 - the final test to confirm cadets are ready to leap unassisted into thin air. Hanging suspended in a harness, they must react to a literal whirlwind of hazards as they are shaken, twirled, sprayed with water, and even

blasted with air from a leaf blower. Some cadets walk away from the test looking more shaken than they do after a typical jump — which is a good thing.

"It throws pressure at you that you're not used to," said jumpmaster Cadet 1st Class Mike Bush. He should know, at last count the well-respected senior had 536 jumps under his belt. The course may be like no other in the world in that 95 percent of the instructors are cadets, and even more unique — all training jumps are solo. The seriousness of the training provides one of the greatest opportunities for leadership development at the Academy.


As a jumpmaster, Cadet Bush has had plenty of experience in the air and knows that ground training greatly prepares his fellow cadets for the nerve rattling experience of freefalling.

"It's hard to simulate the experience on the ground, but we do our best to

prepare them for an abnormal pressure situation."

An "abnormal pressure situation" may be the best description for jumping from an airplane ever. But these cadets are used to pressure, and just about everyone who makes it into the aircraft doesn't land with it.

"On that first jump you don't know exactly what's going to happen," Cadet Third Class Trevor Steen said as he prepared for his fifth and final training jump. "I didn't get nervous until we took off, but once I got in the door, all my fear went away. The training just kicks in and you realize how good the school and the training really is."

Cadet Steen's fears never resurfaced. The next morning as the sun rose over the Front Range, he fell toward earth for the fifth time with a big grin on his face, knowing that when he landed he could then pin on one more achievement to his Air Force career, the basic parachutist badge. 

Cadet First Class Trevor Steen arches as he jumps from an altitude of 4,500 feet above ground level. Parachutists can reach speeds in excess of 100 mph when freefalling. This is Cadet Steen's fifth and final training jump, earning him the Air Force basic jump badge.



**“Human beings need symbols.**

*Symbols are important to us — anyone in the armed forces recognizes that. The beauty of this structure will be like that of all good art: It will mean different things to different people. To young people who know nothing of air power, it will be a focal point to learn about air power. To others, who are not so young, it will be a memorial to the many accomplishments and deeds of Airmen. To those on active duty, it will be a sign of pride that they walk in the footsteps of great men and great women and that they have an obligation to build upon that. And to others, this edifice will be a symbol of the reaching of American air power, of American space power and of the men and women who make up the U.S. Air Force.”*

*— former Secretary of the Air Force  
Dr. James G. Roche*

**The three spires of the Air Force memorial** soar to a height of 270 feet. The spires represent the Air Force's core values — integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do.

**Memorial symbolizes  
sacrifice, celebrates service**

by Staff Sgt. Julie Weckerlein  
photos by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young

**O**n top of a ridge a stone's throw from Arlington National Cemetery, the Air Force Memorial basks among some famous companions. The Marine Corps Iwo Jima Memorial — its flag always waving — is nearby. So is the Netherlands Carillon — a gift from the grateful Dutch people for America's help during and after World War II.

From the memorial's massive blocks of granite — pure and black from Zimbabwe — spires shoot off into the sky like jets. A bronze honor guard stands ready and a glass wall holds meditative inscriptions.

The memorial marks the spot America chose to honor the Airmen who built the Air Force. And it pays homage to future Airmen. It's a fitting site for a memorial — and what a view. Located on Arlington Ridge, it overlooks the Pentagon. And it's a couple of hundred yards from Fort Myers, Va.

“Everyone is in awe with it when they get to the point below the spires,” said retired Maj. Gen. Edward Grillo Jr., who's spent countless hours at the memorial construction site as president of the foundation responsible for its construction. “You can't get that view from anywhere else.”

That view will be available to the public Oct. 14 when the Memorial opens with a ceremony in conjunction with the kick off to the service's 60th anniversary celebration. In one sweeping glance, a visitor can



see a complete panorama of the nation’s capital, from the National Cathedral to the Pentagon to the Ronald Reagan National Airport.

“The view itself is amazing, but when standing in the shadows of these spires, you can’t help but feel overwhelmed by its design, and how it’s so graceful and bold,” said General Grillo, “sort of like flight itself.”

Up until now, the Air Force was the only branch of military service not to have a monument of any kind in the area. Yet, some 54,000 Airmen have been killed while serving in the Air Force and its predecessor organizations.

It wasn’t until the 1990s, though, that commemoration of the service was considered.

“We’re long overdue to have a memorial here in Washington to the sacrifices Airmen have made since the beginning of powered flight,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley. “This is a tribute to those people who are out there in harm’s way.”

The Air Force Memorial Foundation was incorporated in January 1992 with a mission to gain support for its cause. It wasn’t easy getting the project off the ground, though. Over the years, it went through two designs and two locations before a site up the road from the Pentagon, adjacent to Arlington Cemetery, was chosen.

The selected design features three stainless steel spires that soar skyward, reminiscent of the precision “bomb burst” maneuver performed by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds Demonstration Team. The three spires also represent the three core values of the Air Force — integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. Many have pointed out, too, that the three spires represent the Total Force — active, Guard and Reserve Airmen.

Visitors will also see the paved “Runway to Glory” at the site entrance, a larger-than-life bronze Honor Guard statue created by sculptor Zenos Frudakis, two granite inscription walls at both ends of the parade ground and a glass contemplation wall depicting the “missing man formation” to honor fallen Airmen. Inscriptions include quotes from senior leaders, detailed listings of important Air Force missions, as well as a list of Airmen who have earned the Medal of Honor.

James Ingo Freed was the architect responsible for the design, as well as many other Washington D.C.-area buildings. But the Air Force Memorial, he said, was particularly challenging.

“[It] is rooted in the necessary symbolic transition of making the medium for the Air Force visible,” said Mr. Freed. “The Navy has the medium of water, which can always be shown in fountains, and the Army has the medium of land, which can be referenced with mountains and plains. The Air Force has the medium of air, which is very difficult to show.”

He was inspired after seeing F-16s in flight, and thus emulated the graceful arches of their air acrobatics.

“The memorial itself is 270 feet high and appears to be soaring. Its array of arcs against the sky evokes a modern



**Two inscription walls** are located at each end of the central lawn. Retired Maj. Gen. Edward F. Grillo Jr., president of the Air Force Memorial Foundation, reviews the status of the south wall, which will honor Air Force values and campaign accomplishments. The north wall will honor the valor and sacrifices made by so many Airmen.

image of flight by jet and space vehicles,” he said.

Unfortunately, Mr. Freed passed away in the winter of 2005.

“It’s a shame he’s not going to be able to see the end result of his vision,” said General Grillo, who retired in 1996 as a command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours, including 800 combat hours. “He did a remarkable job capturing the feeling of flight and air and space.”

The general is most proud of the fact that the site incorporates so many aspects of the service. The thought process throughout its creation was based on inputs from all over the Air Force, from Airmen past and present.

“This is something that Airmen and the citizens of the United States can be proud of,” said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney McKinley. “It represents the best of what we have to offer in the Air Force.”

The sheer size of the memorial is enough to humble anyone. But it’s the sum of all its parts that really tell the story of what the Air Force and its Airmen are all about. 🇺🇸

courtesy photo

**A model of the memorial** depicts its intended finished appearance which will be unveiled to the public Oct. 14. The official dedication of the memorial kicks off the service’s 60th anniversary commemoration, “Heritage to Horizons,” which runs from October through 2007 and will be recognized at events Air Force-wide.



## Memorial Must-Sees

**The Spires** – The tallest of the three spires is 270 feet tall. The base of the memorial is about 132 feet above sea level, totaling 402 feet above sea level. Made out of stainless steel and reinforced with cement, the spires together weigh about 7,300 tons, with 5,000 tons below the ground. The “ball-in-box” damping system allows the spires to sustain high winds. The spires contain 13 lead balls, each 2,000 pounds and 20 inches in diameter, that are encased in stainless steel shells that roll freely within octagonal boxes lined with synthetic damper pads. As the balls impact the damping pads, energy is dissipated and structural movement is constrained.

**The Honor Guard** — An eight-foot tall, bronze sculpture shows four Honor Guard Airmen standing at attention. Originally purposed to be a relief, the project evolved into the sculptures to complement the size of the spires. The sculptor wanted the undefined figures to become recognizable as individuals, reflecting the diversity of gender and races that strengthens the composition of the Air Force.

**The Star** – The Air Force “star” is embedded in

granite beneath the spires. Traditionally, the star has appeared on Air Force aircraft and missiles, and is in the center of all enlisted rank insignia. It represents the people of the Air Force

**The Runway to Glory and parade ground** — The parade ground runs parallel to the spires and the parking lot and will be available for retirements and enlistment ceremonies. Intersecting the parade ground and leading up to the spires is the “Runway to Glory” which will be painted to resemble an Air Force flightline.

**The Inscription Walls** — Located at both ends of the central lawn, the two walls are 56 feet long, 10 feet tall and one foot thick. Made out of Jet Mist granite, each wall honors specific Air Force achievements. The south wall honors Air Force values and campaign accomplishments, while the north wall honors the valor and sacrifices of numerous Airmen.

**Missing Man Contemplation Wall** — Made out of five layers of low iron glass, the wall is nine feet wide and 10 feet tall. The Missing Man formation is engraved on the front and back of the glass, and is illuminated from below. It represents those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.



# On the road to reconstruction

**Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team helps build bridges, roads and schools**

*by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.*

by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.



**W**hat did you do this summer? Tech. Sgt. Charles Campbell intercepted a group of nomadic Kuchi people during their migration through the Panjshir Valley so he could medically treat the families as they moved their livestock to the high country.

Staff Sgt. Eric Mathiasen dodged around unexploded ordnance in Tarin Kowt to check the status of a teammate after a suicide bomber slammed and ignited a missile-laden vehicle into a Humvee.

First Lt. Chris White helped an Afghan village dedicate a new micro-hydro power station that will provide electricity to a police station.

Over their “summer vacation” members of provincial reconstruction teams can say they helped rebuild Afghanistan, a nation that has suffered a civil war, a Soviet Union occupation, a brutal take-over by

the Taliban government, drought and the destruction of much of its infrastructure and institutions.

When Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld visited Qalat in July, he called the provincial reconstruction teams a shining example of the relationships necessary to assist the Afghan government.

“It’s not an easy task to rebuild after this,” the secretary said. “It takes time; it takes leadership; it takes courage; and it takes the cooperation of leaders such as the governor working with the international community to find ways that are appropriate to assist the people of Afghanistan.”

## **How they do it**

There are 13 provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan. They perform security, governmental interfacing with provincial governors, by Senior Airman Brain Ferguson



**Army Maj. Don Johnson chats** (left) with an Afghan boy on the streets of Bamian, Afghanistan, during a provincial reconstruction team visit. Alongside is Lt. Col. Donald Koehler, Bagram PRT commander, left, and Army Sgt. Otis Fulton. Members of the Bagram team and the 102nd Infantry Battalion (above) go over convoy security procedures before departing for the Parwan province.





**Winding their way** through a mountain pass, members of the Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team make their way to a remote village in Afghanistan.

by Senior Airman Brian Ferguson



and lead the reconstruction efforts in their assigned province. Seven are led by the Air Force, which became involved this year when the Army asked for help in the way of a request for forces.

Because they cater to the needs of the local government, each PRT is different.

For instance, medics on various teams will focus on different aspects of their specialty. In Qalat, Staff Sgt. Michael Ball teaches Afghan National Army soldiers emergency medical care.

"These ANA medics come into contact with the Taliban just about every night," said Sergeant Ball, an emergency medical technician deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C. "They need the skills to take care of their own wounded. It's critically important for them to have these skills."

In Tarin Kowt, it's the PRT that gets attacked. So, medic Sergeant Mathiasen's job is more focused on being prepared to provide critical care to team members and treat local Afghans when needed. On May 1, the medic was riding in a Humvee in the middle of a PRT convoy

when a suicide bomber in a car crashed into the vehicle directly ahead of him and detonated a cache of missile heads. The Sergeant avoided the two or three unexploded ordnance that lay littered on the road and, fortunately, the Soldier he examined didn't have life-threatening injuries. Sergeant Mathiasen is deployed from Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

In Panjshir Province, Sergeant Campbell, a medic deployed from Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., made a house call to Afghan nomads.

"We needed to set up a bag geared more toward family medicine versus emergency medicine," he said.

Sergeant Ball, Sergeant Mathiasen and Sergeant Campbell are all in the same career field, but many times find themselves focusing on different aspects of their profession.

#### **Common factor - road trips**

A common factor of all teams is convoys. They are like traveling salesmen, and the service they're selling is peace and stability in the region.

**Tech. Sgt. Michael Ball and assistant instructor** and translator Sayed Kabir review the Emergency Medical Technician final exam with Afghan National Army members. The soldiers took the eight-week EMT course at the Qalat Provincial Reconstruction Team's trade school. The course teaches students medical and driving skills.

In a year, the Qalat team safely ventured "outside the wire" 284 times. They must risk the dangers of convoy travel to promote good governance and facilitate reconstruction and economic growth by working with local the governor on projects.

"It's all dirt roads and goat trails," said Lt. Col. Kevin McGlaughlin, the Qalat PRT commander. "It's mountainous and difficult to get around."

So another goal for the teams is to build roads so the local people can get to hospitals.

The dirt roads in the remote regions of Afghanistan are really just wide trails carved in the sides of mountain cliffs, winding their way





**Republic of Korea engineer Capt. Jae Ho Han** inspects a bridge under construction in Afghanistan. While a project is under construction, teams will intermittently visit to check on its progress.

through canyons. Like goats, vehicles and colorful jingle trucks butt heads as they try to pass each other on the single-lane roadways. For the Bagram team, convoys can stretch into four-day forays. The team travels like a band of gypsies, going from town to town. They stay where they can, and stop at villages with military precision. The team's doctor, Capt. Dave Burns, evaluated a town's clinic while team members unloaded medical supplies. At the same time, security forces team member Staff Sgt. Michael Myers met with the chief of police while the team chief, Army Maj. Don Johnson, talked with the local mayor. During that same time, two Republic of Korea engineers, Captains Byung-wook Moon and Jai-ho Han, inspected a construction site. Like the Bagram team, many teams are composed of coalition troops.

As per PRT standards, a province's governor is the lead agent for all reconstruction projects. The team helps fund projects and checks the quality of a contractor's work during the actual building phase of construction. The contractor hires local villagers to do much of the construction, which adds a sense of pride and ownership of the facility. During a one-year tour, Bagram team members will visit a particular village on average about eight times. On the road about five times a week, they return to remote villages about every six weeks.

**Change is taking place**

For the Air Force, PRT involvement falls on the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. These Airmen are involved with seven of the 13 coalition PRTs throughout the country.

Plans call for all the PRTs to be turned over to the International Security Assistance Forces. Until that happens, the Air Force still needs volunteers to fill the one-year PRT positions. Airmen are needed in supply, security forces, communications, administration, personnel, civil engineering, information operations, intelligence and operations. Before Secretary Rumsfeld left Afghanistan, he spoke to members of the PRT. "All of you decided that this was important to serve your country," he said. "You're here doing it, and you're doing it successfully. You can all be darn proud that you're doing it, for the rest of your lives." 🦅

— Capt. Mark Gibson, Capt. Joe Campbell and Army Sgt. Sara Wood contributed to this article

photo by Army Spc. Michael Zuk



**Bagram Provincial Reconstruction Team Commander Lt. Col. Donald Koehler** and Afghan Gov. Jabar Taqwa of the Parwan province cut the ribbon at a newly built school in Charikar, Afghanistan.

# The ABCs of pRT

The provincial reconstruction teams' efforts in Afghanistan are so successful Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice used them as a template to inaugurate the first U.S.-led PRT in Iraq in November. While addressing the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations last fall, Secretary Rice said, "To execute our strategy we will restructure a portion of the U.S. mission in Iraq. Learning from successful precedents used in Afghanistan, we will deploy provincial reconstruction teams in key parts of the country." The coalition effort to secure and rebuild a post-Taliban Afghanistan has been the PRT's mission from the start. A mix of civilian, U.S. military and coalition members compose teams that try to promote conditions for self-sufficiency, enduring prosperity and a secure, stable environment. The Army created PRTs during Operation Enduring Freedom in early 2002. These teams assessed humanitarian needs, implemented small reconstruction projects and established relations with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and nongovernmental organizations already in the field. Late in 2002, the United States expanded the program by creating the first PRTs. This time, force protection and representatives of U.S. government civilian agencies joined the teams. The U.S. Embassy in Kabul issued a general set of parameters that established the PRT objectives, which are being followed to this day. Those principles include extending the authority of the Afghan central government, improving security and promoting reconstruction.

The first PRTs stationed themselves in hot spots where no relief organizations dared tread. Their presence deterred insurgents and criminals who had been active in those areas. After securing an area, the PRTs handed the area over to NATO-run International Security Assistance Forces. A byproduct of security will be the return of international relief organizations, many of whom left in 2005 because of deadly attacks on volunteers. The Air Force became involved in 2006 at the request of the Army, called a Request For Forces. Airmen would assist with the Army mission, much like helping with convoy duties in Iraq. It is anyone's guess how long the PRT mission will continue in Afghanistan. A near-term goal is to transfer all PRT functions to the International Security Assistance Forces to make it truly an international mission. What is certain is the Air Force needs more Airmen to volunteer for the one-year tours. If interested, check for openings on the Air Force Personnel Center Web site <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>.



Letter to Airmen:

## Every Airman a Communicator

Because of our Airmen, the United States Air Force is the best air and space force in the world and we're gaining leadership in cyberspace. Yet many citizens do not fully realize what you do and the sacrifices you make every day. Because you do your job so well, most Americans simply don't think about the Air Force's contribution to the Global War on Terror - to include the efforts of those of you serving on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To get this message out, we've embarked on an enhanced Strategic Communication program. Our Strategic Communication efforts will build better relationships with key audiences and the support that is critical to operational success, force modernization, and the development of our most precious resource: Airmen.

Our major enhancement is you. The success of this effort will rely on making every Airman an ambassador for our Air Force, at home and abroad. Your stories resonate the most with local newspapers, schools, and rotary clubs. The American public looks up to you as a model of integrity, and by sharing your experiences you are the best spokesmen for our Air Force.

This responsibility means that Airmen must understand air, space and cyberspace power and how the Air Force contributes to the Nation's defense. To assist you, we're distributing "The Air Force Story," which will provide you with information to discuss with family, friends and the public.

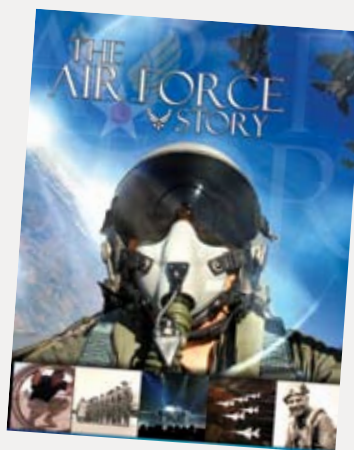
Those Airmen who have deployed should have an "Airman's Card," available from your commander or Public Affairs office. This card will help guide your communication efforts. It reminds you that when telling your story, "You represent the Air Force, its values and its image. Be honest, candid, and stay within your area of expertise."

The new Air Force advertising campaign, "Do Something Amazing," harnesses the power of your individual story. These television and Internet videos feature our outstanding Airmen describing the contributions they make every day to our nation's defense. One person's story carries the hopes and dreams of a new generation of Airmen and confirms the public's belief that we serve on their behalf.

I encourage you to show your pride and share both your personal story and the Air Force story with others. Your active involvement in this communications strategy will help the public better understand their Air Force and the contribution we make to the Nation's security every day.

You are the finest Airmen the world has ever seen. Be proud of yourself, your Air Force, and your heritage. Our Air Force is counting on you to communicate your story like no one else can.

Michael W. Wynne  
Secretary of the Air Force







# HERITAGE TO HORIZONS

[www.af.mil/library/usaf60.asp](http://www.af.mil/library/usaf60.asp)



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# THE FINAL FRAME

A high-angle, aerial photograph of a B-2 Spirit bomber in flight over St. Louis, Missouri. The bomber is positioned in the lower half of the frame, flying towards the right. Its distinctive stealthy, flat-top design and large, irregularly shaped openings are clearly visible. In the background, the St. Louis Gateway Arch rises prominently, its white, catenary curve dominating the skyline. The city's dense urban landscape, with various skyscrapers and buildings, fills the rest of the background. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall composition is framed by a black border with white rectangular cutouts, resembling a film strip.

## SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS

*photo by Tech. Sgt. JUSTIN D. PYLE*

A B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., flies over the St. Louis Arch in August. The B-2 flyover was one of several events celebrating Air Force Week in St. Louis. The inaugural Air Force Week brought together Airmen of the past, present and future with the purpose of raising public awareness of the service's operations, capabilities and support of the war on terrorism and thank the public for its heartfelt support.